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## Locals fear loss of business from Raritan Bay lead

Already stung by weak economy, retailers predict a poor summer season

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

BY ALIYAH SHAHID

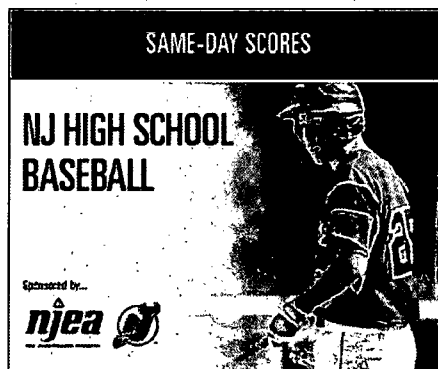
For the Star-Ledger

Business owners near the Raritan Bay in Old Bridge and Sayreville are worried.

"The consequences to my store are going to be drastic," Kash Kim, manager of Fred's Bait & Tackle in Sayreville, said of the Environment Protection Agency's plan to close three waterfront areas deemed hazardous because of lead contamination.

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Kim said several businesses, including gas stations, restaurants and tackle shops, would be hit hard.

"All of my customers are worried they will not be able to fish in the area," Kim said. "This place is going to look like a ghost town."

Last week, the EPA said warning signs and fencing will go up as soon as possible around the western jetty near Cheesequake Creek in Old Bridge, at a small beach north of the jetty in Sayreville and at the Laurence Harbor sea wall. The federal agency reported levels of lead as high as 198,000 parts per million in the soil in those areas.

According to the EPA's website, lead is considered a hazard when it exceeds 1,200 parts per million in areas where children play.

For businesses already struggling because of the recession, the timing could not have been worse, the owners said.

At Archie's Boat Tops in the Morgan section of Sayreville, just a few miles from the affected areas, brothers Stan and Tom Szeszko said there has been a 50 percent drop in business already in the last year, largely due to the economy. The shutdown of local fishing areas, Tom Szeszko said, would only exacerbate the problem.

"A lot of boats dock around here. Those are potential clients," Tom Szeszko

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**SOFTBALL**

said as he cut fabric for a custom-made boat top.

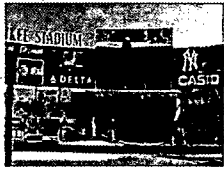
But the Szeszkos don't believe the signs and fencing will keep people from fishing.

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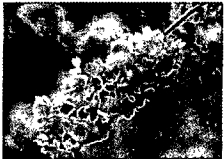
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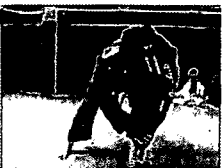
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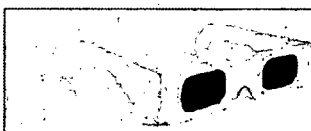
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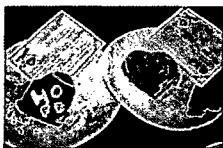
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## Locals fear loss of business from Raritan Bay lead - Page 2

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"Look at me, I'm healthy," said Tennaro, who has a large tattoo of a striped bass on his ankle. "This is going to affect a whole lot of people. During the summer, this place is like Acapulco."

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Tennaro said he will continue fishing in the area, but worried the stigma of high lead levels would deter others.

Doug Baumann of Monroe is one of them. Baumann said he threw away a striped bass he caught last week while standing on the western jetty after learning of the lead levels from a friend. He said he's reluctant to fish in the affected areas.

"While fishing in this area, I have noticed basketball-sized hunks of slag on the jetty and the Laurence Harbor beach east of the sea wall," said Baumann, 56. He said it never occurred to him that the pieces might be lead.

Next door to Archie's Boat Tops, at a restaurant called the Fishery, owner Billy Papas, said he, too, was worried about the beach shutdown. "It would probably affect my business. Everyone comes to the marina and here to eat." Papas noted his seafood does not come from Raritan Bay, but from New York, Texas and Panama.

Business owners also are wary of the cleanup, which they predict could take years. They said the EPA should be 100 percent sure the lead presents a health hazard before mounting a long and painful cleanup. "It's like finding a splinter and amputating an arm," said Kim. "That splinter has been here for 50 years."

Aliyah Shahid is a reporter for the Local News Service. She may be reached at [ashahid@njlns.com](mailto:ashahid@njlns.com).

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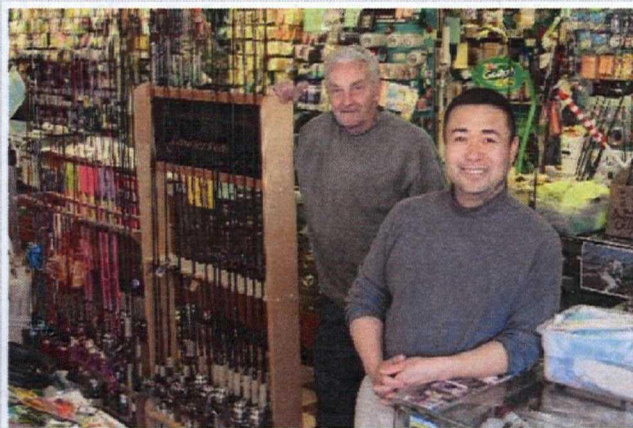
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## Old Bridge, Sayreville business owners fear losses due to Raritan Bay lead

by Aliyah Shahid/For The Star-Ledger  
Tuesday March 24, 2009, 12:04 PM



Kash Kim, right, and William Bouchard at Fred's Bait & Tackle shop in South Amboy.

"All of my customers are worried they will not be able to fish in the area. This place is going to look like a ghost town." - KASH KIM, manager of Fred's Bait & Tackle in Sayreville

Business owners near the Raritan Bay in Old Bridge and Sayreville are worried.

"The consequences to my store are going to be drastic," Kash Kim, manager of Fred's Bait & Tackle in Sayreville, said of the Environment Protection Agency's plan to close three waterfront areas deemed hazardous because of lead contamination.

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Aliyah Shahid/For The Star-Ledger

Tom Szeszko at work at Archie's Boat Tops in the Morgan section of Sayreville.

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Posted by **ira23** on [03/24/09 at 2:29PM](#)

It's about time, the state and the feds should go after NL and the crimes they committed dumping all the decades into the river, why stop at these two communities when the contamination goes farther up to Edison and to Carteret since the tides and flow carry the toxins there as well, go get 'em , GREENPEACE!!!!

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